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**Statement delivered by
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Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
on the occasion of the
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Mr Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to represent Nepal at this Conference and share my views on various dimensions of agricultural development. I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson and other members of the bureau for your well-deserved election.

Nepal highly appreciates FAOs efforts in the sustainable development of rural agriculture and food security in Nepal. Nepal and FAO have completed 42 years of partnership. FAO continues to assist us in various areas, especially food and nutrition security, institutional and policy support, marketing competitiveness and conservation of natural resources and their utilization.

Currently FAOs cooperation is framed under a four-year country strategy plan from 2019 to 2023. Agriculture and food security projects are under implementation to supply food and nutrition to women and children from small and marginalized farmer communities in the mid-Western and far-Western regions of Nepal.

FAO has also cooperated in the development and implementation of food and nutrition, safety and security reform programs, which are to be implemented from 2019 to 2023. The earthquake affected eight districts in Nepal that ranked low in the Human Development Index. We have prepared implementation directives of best agricultural practices in Nepal with a view to initiating good agricultural practices and promoting quality food and agricultural products. In addition, FAO has supported us in environmental adaptation, quality food production, plant and animal quarantine efforts via FAOs technical assistance.

Mr Chairperson, Nepal's promulgation of the constitution of 2015 has been conducive to the further development of the agricultural sector in our country. Nepal has recognized the right to food and food sovereignty as fundamental rights in that constitution. Relevant laws have been amended to implement and respect those rights. Nepal remains committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals relating to agriculture and food by 2030.

For this, national agricultural policies and the Agricultural Development Strategy, including the Zero Hunger initiative, are part of our national Plan of Action and have been implemented. For the sustainable development of the agricultural sector, to promote the welfare of farmers and to make agriculture an attractive, secure and decent profession, the Government of Nepal has implemented a 20 years of agricultural development strategy for the period from 2015 to 2035.

To realize the vision of a prosperous Nepal, a happy Nepal and happy Nepali people, the Government of Nepal has formulated a Fifteenth Periodic Plan with the programs and policies of the fiscal year through 27/6 and 27/7 with a national commitment to self-reliance in major agricultural products and livestock

within the coming years. Nepal has created a conducive environment for investment in the agricultural sector. The Nepal Investment Summit, convened recently in Kathmandu, identifies the agricultural sector as a rewarding and an attractive sector for investment.

Nepal is committed to promoting rural agriculture and empowering the small farmers to mitigate the negative impacts of unemployment and migration. These include addressing the gender gap, extreme urbanization and low agricultural productivity.

We believe that this Conference should be deliberating on these pressing issues, such as labour migration from agricultural and rural areas and reforming the living standards and income of rural people and finding ways to effectively mobilize resources in favour of the Least Developed Countries.

Likewise, we hope that our deliberations will prove to be useful for the benefit of rural agriculture, smallholding farmers, and will also benefit rural women that shoulder the burden of agriculture when young men migrate.

I am confident that this Conference will be able to frame future strategies in the cross-cutting issues of migration, agriculture and rural development that is so useful to countries which are largely dependent on agriculture, countries such as Nepal. Conferences such as this can do so much by focusing minds on important issues and can do so much to improve the livelihoods of the farming communities, and Nepal is very keen on improving those situations.

We hope that these deliberations in this Body will indeed be fruitful, will benefit the persons who are directly affected and recognize the role of rural agriculture in improving their lives. We place great trust that such policies will lead to concrete improvements and will positively affect the actual lives of the individuals who are counting on us. These are countries, such as my own country, or countries which have very large rural sectors and large population groups who depend to a great extent on us here to make progress and improve rural development.